R E P O R T  R E S U M E S

ED 014 390 RE 000 306

DEPARTMENTALIZATION OF READING IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

BY- STOWE, ELAINE H.

PUB DATE MAY 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.20 28P.

DESCRIPTORS- *READING RESEARCH, *GROUPING (INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES), *PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS, *SECONDARY GRADES,

DEPARTMENTALIZATION IS A FORM OF GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION, AN ADMINISTRATIVE METHOD FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO TEACHERS IN SOME PLANNED MANNER. SOME PRECEDENTS FOR THE RECENT REVIVAL OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES ARE CITED. THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION ORGANIZATION ARE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL--A PROGRAM INVOLVING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN FROM CULTURALLY DEPRIVED AREAS BEING CONDUCTED BY CARL BEREITER AND SIEGFRIED ENGELMANN IN ILLINOIS, TWO SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE SCHOOLS IN THE SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, AND A READING PROGRAM AT THE SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE (SEATTLE, MAY 4-6, 1967). (RH)

ED014390

ELAINE H. STOWE

RE 000 306 IRA

# DEPARTMENTALIZATION OF READING IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In this atomic age of automation, teaching machines, and electronics, increased emphasis on learning has not lessened the demands on the teaching of reading, but rather has heightened it.

In an effort to meet this demand educators constantly strive for new methods, new approaches, and new organizational patterns. Our concern with present reading practices for the purpose of this paper will be with one type of organizational pattern that appears in various adaptations in the schools--namely departmentalization per se. Previous speakers have discussed various types and modifications of departmentalization.

For decades educators have been advocating instruction geared to individual differences. Teachers have accepted this theory but, faced with the reality of individual differences of pupils within a classroom, have been frustrated in seeking to apply it. They are cognizant of the conflict between instruction based on grade-packaged content and the kind of instruction that is suggested by research and experience pertaining to child development, learning theory, and curriculum practices. Classroom instructors recognize the range of abilities and the variations of achievements of pupils within the classroom. Closer scrutiny also discloses the fact that the abundance of different kinds of materials necessary to meet the instructional needs for this group requires more space for housing than the average classroom is equipped to handle. And so the teacher's dilemma begins to unfold.

RE 000 306

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Will the organization of the school solve the reading problem? The main purpose of any plan of organization is to provide for the continuous growth of each student, to provide him with the best possible experiences and opportunities for learning, and to provide him with the opportunity to work with other students who may need to work on the same skills. A wide range of individual differences will still exist within any group regardless of the type of administrative plan of school organization adopted. If the teacher does not recognize the need for gearing instruction to the student's level of achievement, no administrative plan will be effective. Materials and instruction will need to be varied; they will need to b e selected in light of the purposes they are to serve.

Departmentalization is a form of grouping. Grouping for instruction is an administrative method for assigning pupils to teachers in some planned manner. The organization can be tailored to fit any particular program that the school personnel considers useful and organizational patterns that are enthusiastically supported by the teachers are usually most effective.(1).

At the present time various kinds of organization for subjects and classes are under consideration by teachers and administrators. Many educators are attempting to find new and novel approaches. Some of these new plans are modifications of departmental patterns of twenty-five, thirty, or even fifty years ago. The recent revival of departmentalization in the elementary grades is not without precedent. This procedure of departmentalization described as a method of school organization under which each teacher in an elementary school instructs in one subject, or in one group of related subjects only, is mentioned

by Irving Kilpatrick (2) as being employed by school administrators in the 1890's. It evolved at that time because of a general demand in the large cities for more expert teaching. As the system was developed in New York it began in the eighth grade, moved downward to the seventh, then following successful development there, continued downward to the sixth and fifth grades. No mention is made of extending it below this grade in that district at that time. The principal advantages claimed for it were expert teaching, improved discipline, improved physical conditions, better equipment, enriched curriculum, and unity and force in school management. The objections were that it tended to promote over-work, to provide weak correlation, to make teachers become narrow minded, to create difficulties in school management, and to result in lack of personal control of pupils on the part of teachers. This type of organization became an accepted practice and continued to appear whenever schools felt it met their needs.

An interesting and unique use of departmentalization that appears to be an early attempt of team teaching is worthy of mention.

The Cooperative Group Plan, conceived by James F. Hosic (3) in the 1920's called for *teachers* to work in small groups, with a chairman of each group. All other grouping or departmentalization plans involved the grouping of *children*, not of teachers. Under this plan teachers were put in charge of special rooms. The teachers were specialists in teaching children, not in teaching their special subjects. From time to time the teachers met to plan ways to integrate special subject areas which would provide for the essential learning experiences of the pupils.

Early in the thirties, William Kilpatrick (9) wrote about departmentalization in terms that could easily be applied to some modern educational practices.

> "The factory system, introduced in the early part of the nineteenth century and characterized by specialization of work, proved so successful that it was applied to education. Teachers began to specialize in certain parts of the curriculum. The future of the system was forecasted in the following manner.
>
> "Eventually our schools will, in certain respects, resemble great manufacturing plants. The achievement test will become accurate gauges of the educational (manufacturing) processes. In each subject the children will pass through a given number of steps in as definite and sequen tial an order as the steps in a manufacturing process. The standard tests will measure the accomplishments as the machine producers are gauged. Each process will be taught by an expert, automatic devices and machines being used where possible.
>
> "The achievement tests compel the child to aim each educational effort at one object where we are now aiming at a flock. For a certain definite and limited time, each child will attack his own specific difficulty after the application of the tests has shown him what that difficulty is. The children will be grouped in such a manner that all who are overcoming a specific obstacle concentrate their efforts upon it at the same time."

By 1952, educators were concluding that departmentalization resulted in an artificial mechanized instructional program. For example, George Kyte (6) stated that the needed elasticity of time for instructional purposes was impossible in this organization. Furthermore, teaching was prone to become subject-centered and the pupil, because of his exposure to so many teachers, could be exploited by the many demands of all his teachers. A continuous and conscientious effort on the part of the faculty was necessary in order to have a desirable, well integrated, articulated, instructional program.

Objections that echo the sentiments of those of the earlier years continue to appear at the present time: the teacher has

the responsibility for too many pupils and cannot really know any of them well, time is wasted in moving from room to room, and over a period of time the strain of the work on the teacher is too great. In an effort to solve the problems inherent in the plan, yet retain its advantages, partly-departmentalized programs have evolved, and many schools today reflect this partial plan. One example is the Joplin Plan which attempts to departmentalize homogenously the elementary self-contained classroom. Educators continue their evaluation of this organization.

Arthur Gates, writing recently on current organizational practices for reading instruction, comments that "Departmentalizing for reading in the elementary school is not supported by current experience or research." (7)

Margaret McKim sums up the concern of many educators regarding this type of organization when she stated "every part of the daily schedule makes its contribution to reading skill. The problem of finding enough time for scheduling reading activities becomes less formidable when every reading experience in which the children engage is thought of as providing an opportunity for reading instruction and practice." (8)

Some specific examples of schools that are presently using the departmentalization organization have been selected to discuss in detail. The first is a pre-school class, the next two are seventh and eighth grade schools, and the last one is a reading program in a senior high school.

## PRE-SCHOOL

One of the most controversial pilot programs in departmentalization presently under study is the one being conducted by Carl Bereiter and Seigfried Engelmann in Illinois. This program involves pre-school children from culturally deprived areas. They emphasize academic objectives and use a highly structured approach to achieve them. (8) Carl Bereiter and Siegfried Engelmann are adherents of the "cognitive" school of psychology, which holds that an individual's achievement in life depends very largely on what he has been helped to learn before the age of four, and that many children are irreparably damaged because they do not learn enough during this early, crucial period.

In this pilot program were fifteen pre-school children selected from a predominatly Negro school district in a community where the Negro population has, by northern standards, an exceptionally low per-capita income. From the first day the children were given an intensive, fast-paced, highly structured program of instruction in basic language skills, reading, and arithmetic. Each of these three subjects was taught as a separate class, each with its own teacher, with the children circulating in groups of five from class to class. Classes were at first fifteen minutes in length, then expanded to twenty minutes as the children became better adjusted to the routine. The only other major educational activity was singing. Here specially written songs were employed to give additional practice in skills being taught in the classes. Unstructured activities and semistructured activities from ten to twenty minutes in length were interspersed between the three academic areas of language, arithmetic, and reading.

At the conclusion of a nine-month period, each child's progress was evaluated on a standardized achievement test--the Wide-Range Achievement Test, selected because the norms extend down below the first-grade level. Results showed eleven of the children scored at or above the beginning second-grade level in arithmetic; and only one scored below the first-grade level. Although spelling had never been taught, four of the children scored at the beginning first-grade level. Results revealed that although the children had not yet entered kindergarten, they were, according to the two most basic tests in reading and arithmetic, ready at that time to enter first grade.

Intelligence tests scores of these children rose from an average of 93 to slightly above 100 at the end of seven months. This was a greater gain than that which would normally be expected from improved responsiveness to test-taking situations.

The three-teacher arrangement seemed to have important advantages for culturally disadvantaged children. They had an opportunity to know each teacher well; if a certain teacher did not relate well to a child the child had the opportunity to have instruction from two other sources. Thus potentially neurotic relationships may have been avoided, and the child learned how to learn from a variety of teachers. Observers of this experiement indicated that the children eventually were able to learn from practically anyone who could teach.

However, it would be deceptive to give the impression that these children had attained the same background and success in use of language as those children from more culturally privileged homes. They had achieved, however, at an above normal rate of learning, those academic objectives outlined for the program. These specific

areas had been selected as the most crucial areas for future academic success.

Many educators are critical of the pressures applied to these pupils in order to force them to attain academically. They feel other educational values of social adjustment, self-confidence, self-knowledge, knowledge of society and an opportunity to use concrete materials were completely disregarded in the experiment. Over a period of time the attainment of these broader objectives may be more vital to participating as a successful member of society than those emphasized in the research experiment. In any event, time is needed before valid conclusions can be reached.

In Language Programs for the Disadvantaged, (9) the report of the National Council of Teachers of English Task Force on teaching English to the disadvantaged, the committee sums up their observations of this program in the following manner:

> "Despite reservations about the applicability of some of the findings and methods of Mr. Bereiter's work to the normal preschool situation for disadvantaged children, conferees saw much value in specific experiments of this kind assisting educators to identify characteristics of disadvantaged children and approaches which provide remediation critical to success in school. The conferees felt that such projects seem less to provide model programs for emulation than ways of advancing general knowledge about the characteristics of disadvantaged learners of preschool age."

To a large extent, therefore, the organizational pattern used in these very early school years is determined by the nature of the learning goals, by the techniques decided upon, and by the way in which children have been found to learn effectively.

## ELEMENTARY - SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

The San Juan Unified School District in Sacramento County, California, spreads over a large area and serves approximately

52,000 children. The people of the area are Caucasian; the majority are in the middle or upper-income brackets, with a few in the lower socio-economic levels. The very few students (14) from a minority group are from families with very high incomes.

Teachers and administrators in evaluating the reading programs in grades seven and eight realized their English classes were not making adequate provision for the teaching of reading. Parents with whom administrators conferred concurred in this conclusion. As a result of the study of possibilities for alleviating this condition, the consensus of those making the study was that a departmentalized

organization afforded them the greatest opportunity to achieve their goal of improving the quality of reading of students at these grade levels. It was decided that reading classes that were separate from the required English period would be provided and would be required of all students.

Reading classes that cut across grade levels were organized and the teaching of reading skills was intensified. Through utilizing the services of members of the staff who were interested in teaching reading and who were willing to improve their own knowledge and skill in using various techniques, the instructional program was improved.

The California Test of Mental Maturity, the California Achievement Test, and the Durrell-Sullivan Reading Test were used as diagnostic and achievement instruments. Teacher judgments plus students' test scores were used as bases for grouping students.

The assignment of students to groups was flexible so that any individual not properly placed could be reassigned to the proper group. Those students who were very low in reading achievement were given the Oral Gilmore as a diagnostic test. Teachers were trained by the coordinator of reading, not only to give the test, but to interpret the results.

The staff of the Arden Elementary School felt that a non-graded reading program would best meet the needs of their school. They established reading levels and placed only twenty students in each level. A copy of their description of the levels follows:

Reading Level 1

Remediation is provided in sight vocabulary, structural analysis, and other reading needs as determined by diagnosis. The typical student placed in Level 1 would

be classified as a "slow learner" and/or who would meet the criterion for the San Juan District remedial reading program.

Reading Level 2

This level provides for basic developmental reading instruction. Students placed in Level 1 may, at times, work with this group.

Reading Level 3

Developmental skills comparable to sixth grade are emphasized at this level. Independent reading is encouraged.

Reading Level 4

An independent reading program comparable to grade seven is provided.

Reading Level 5

At this level, which is comparable to grade eight, students participate in a program emphasizing literature.

Reading Level 6

Level 6 is for students who have mastered all developmental skills in Levels 1 through 5. Students placed in Level 6 are identified as gifted and have advanced reading achievement and motivation.

In each level developmental reading skills are emphasized, with word-attack skills, structural skills, and comprehension skills being intensified.

The materials used are: state texts, basal and enrichment; carefully selected library books; and special remedial books such as the Morgan Bay Mystery series and the Deep Sea Adventure series.

Another program worthy of mention is conducted at the Jonas Salk Elementary School. This school has a two-period core curriculum consisting of language arts and social science, each core being taught by one teacher. In addition to the core curriculum, each student is assigned to one hour per day in a reading class. A four-room building houses these reading classes. Two rooms have a movable partition between them, allowing for free movement of students between the rooms.

The basic materials used are the same as those in Arden School, but additional equipment has been provided which includes tape recorders, listening centers with head phones, and overhead projectors and transparencies.

There are at present three reading levels. In each level students are grouped according to their instructional needs. All groupings are flexible. Each level is taught by a reading teacher, with each teacher teaching six periods of reading in a seven-period day.

In-service meetings are conducted regularly on a monthly basis, with provisions being made for special in-service meetings as the need arises. These meetings are conducted by the coordinator of reading.

The administrators in both of the above mentioned elementary schools are charged with: 1) developing the organizational pattern with their staffs and with the coordinator of reading; 2) meeting with parents and explaining the program; 3) inculcating a positive attitude toward the program on the part of teachers, students, and parents; and 4) carrying through the program after it is initiated.

Evaluation of the reading program is made by pre-tests and post-tests using standardized reading tests. These are administered

yearly to determine the status of the program. While there are no control groups, the reading gains of pupils compared with their scores of previous years attest to the success of their departmentalized reading program.

Subjective survey results indicate that students' attitudes toward school and toward learning have improved. Teachers report better attendance and fewer behavior problems. Parents report pupils' increased interest in school and fewer behavior problems at home.

An added benefit from this program is the improvement of pupil attitudes, not only in these reading classes, but in attendance; general attitudes toward accomplishment in other subjects; and in behavior in the classroom, on the schoolground, and in their homes.

Previous to this organizational change teachers in all subjects reported that, whereas they each taught the vocabulary of the particular subject being studied, there was insufficient time for the adequate development of all reading skills. Teachers also concluded that it was of prime importance for students at these grade levels to develop study skills and that this could best be accomplished through special reading courses. They indicated, too, that teachers in academic subjects were not sufficiently well prepared to teach reading as effectively as it should be taught.

## SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Sacramento City Unified School District serves the capitol city, and has a school population of approximately 53,000 in kindergarten through grade 12. Sacramento Senior High School, one of

four senior high schools, has a heterogeneous population of approximately 2,500 students, coming from such culturally different neighborhoods as the River Park District where many of the State College professors have their homes, to the Oak Park District where each year there is a sizable immigration of Negroes from the Deep South. The other major minority groups are Mexican-Americans and Orientals. Almost daily there are new enrollments of students from Mexico and Hong Kong, who speak not a word of English.

Evaluators of the English curriculum of Sacramento High School found that the greatest need of the majority of students was for the development of reading skills that would enable them to succeed in their school work and in their outside-of-school activities.

The educational philosophy of the high schools in the district is implemented through what is termed a "goal-centered curriculum". Each student indicates his professional or occupational goal and enrolls in corresponding courses - high school terminal courses for the student who is not planning to go to college, junior college preparatory courses for the student who plans to attend college for only two years, and the four-year-college-preparatory course for the student who plans to enter a four-year-college or who plans to attend a junior college, and then transfer to a four-year-college or university.

Students in the high school terminal classes are generally poor readers, with some students being virtual non-readers and others having varying levels of reading skills, with seventh-grade reading ability being the upper limit. Students with reading ability higher than seventh-grade are counseled to move to junior college preparatory classes.

In the traditional program, as many as 35 of these students were placed in one class and given reading materials that required at least tenth-grade reading ability. Under these conditions the students not only made little progress in reading, but many of them actually regressed. As a result of their lack of success, the attitudes of the students were deplorable--they either vegetated or they behaved obnoxiously. They could see no reason for taking the required courses of English. In order to alleviate these undesirable conditions and to motivate these students to learn to read, English Language Laboratories were established in Sacramento Senior High School. A teacher in the school describes the establishment of the Laboratories as "the beginning of a new day following a dark night."

To accommodate all the high school terminal sophomores and juniors, four traditional English classrooms were selected to be transformed into laboratories for the 24 classes that were required every day. The rooms were completely refurbished with modern lighting, acoustical treatment, blackout curtains, new furniture, and were provided with abundant electrical outlets. Tables and chairs were substituted for the traditional desks. The mechanical equipment for each laboratory included eight typewriters, a movie projector, an overhead projector, a phonograph, a filmstrip projector with tachistoscopic attachment, a listening station, tape recorders, a controlled-reader, reading accelerators, table screens, and a wall screen.

The reading materials selected for the laboratories must, of necessity, provide for the development of basic reading skills on an

elementary level but, at the same time, they must be of interest to teen-agers. The materials provided included almost everything published that has been tested and has proven to be effective for use by students of the type enrolled in high school terminal classes. These materials represent a wide range of reading levels and include reading and spelling laboratories; readers developed for teen-age students with low reading abilities; spellers; short stories; dramas; science books; occupational-oriented stories, both factual and fictional; biographies; district-prepared comsumable materials; encyclopedias; and dictionaries. Filmstrips, films, records, tapes, and transparencies that have been purchased for these classes are made available through a special library section of the district's audio-visual department.

The English curriculum for the high school terminal student has been designed to enable each student to achieve the following objectives:

To realize the importance and the need for further development of the basic skills of reading, speaking, listening, writing, and spelling

To develop positive attitudes toward self and toward life

To learn to express an idea in a complete statement, both orally and in writing

To develop the desire to stay in school

To gain understanding of literature and to find pleasure in reading stories

To gain insights for personal growth from reading good literature

To develop skills and attitudes that will make him employable

As a means of helping students to achieve these goals, teaching study guides were developed to help teachers to make the courses interesting, effective, and balanced. In these guides activities are suggested for the development of reading skills and desirable attitudes; for improving speaking habits and listening skills; for extending writing skills and improving spelling skills; and for making literature interesting. Most of the activities suggested in these guides are directly connected with some of the chief interests of teenagers, such as owning a car, getting a job, and having fun.

Accompanying these guides are Students' Materials Kits that supply the teacher with materials to implement the lessons in the guides. In the kits are such items as job application blanks, socio-dramas, message forms, telegraph blanks, pictures that provide topics for compositions, telephone message blanks, message tapes, and job interview tapes. The use of kits permits teachers to spend their time in the preparation of lessons and in teaching, rather than in searching for or preparing materials and duplicating them. Consumable materials are stockpiled so that they may be reordered from the central library as needed.

Human factors were considered also in the establishing of English Language Laboratories. First under consideration was that the number of students in high school terminal classes should not exceed a maximum of 20 students; a larger number precludes the individual work that these students sorely need. Federal funds permitted the necessary reduction of class size. All who are working in the program agree that reduction of class size is indispensable

to a successful program, and they place it as the chief factor in the success of the program.

The second human factor to be considered was the selection of the right teacher for this program. This was obviously vital for the success of the students. The teacher must be interested in teen-agers and individuals; must have a warm, out-going nature that enables him to establish rapport with these students, who often tend to be difficult; and must be able to derive satisfaction from any progress these students make, even though they fall short of achieving the goals of the program.

The high school English teacher who has had training in the teaching of reading is so rare as to be virtually non-existent, yet the teaching of reading is the main activity of the English Language Laboratory. In-service training had to be provided in order to get teachers of English to recognize the need for teaching reading in secondary schools and to acquaint them with techniques that can be employed. Through demonstrations, individual conferences, and summer workshops, the teachers receive much additional training. The in-service program continues throughout the year, and teachers receive individual guidance as they need or request it. Teachers are informed quickly of any new techniques developed, and new materials are always made available immediately after they are prepared or when commercial ones are received.

A third human factor inthe success of the English Language Laboratory is the teacher aide. This is an adult assistant who helps the teacher in every conceivable way, but perhaps the prime function of the aide is tutoring individual students. After the

teacher has presented a lesson, the aide helps the student, who doesn't know how to start; she helps the student who has been absent to find his place in the work; she gives individual students help wherever needed.

The aide does all of the clerical work, releasing the teacher for her most important function--teaching. The aide takes roll, checks objective tests, records grades, types ditto masters and duplicates them, prepares bulletin boards displays, and does the filing. Since several teachers use the same laboratory during the day, the aide is responsible for kepping the room attractive. She checks the book shelves for orderliness; sees that the mechanical equipment is in good working order, that it is available when needed, and is stored in a designated place after use; and keeps an inventory of supplies and equipment. The aide also operates the projectors. In addition, the teacher aide keeps a complete reading progress record for each student. The record is cumulative and the card goes into the student's permanent record for the use of the teachers in the ensuing years.

The teachers agree unanimously that, after the reduced class size, the second most important factor in the success of the laboratories is the teacher aide.

A fourth human factor in the success of the language arts laboratories was discovered as a result of being unable to provide a sufficient number of adult teacher aides. More aides were needed, so the school experimented with using students as teacher assistants. Volunteers were recruited from study halls. The assistants, of course, have no tutorial duties, but they relieve the teachers of

many clerical duties. The success of this program far exceeded expectations, for student assistants in most cases were just as efficient as the adult aides. The program has now been extended by assigning student assistants to teachers of junior college preparatory classes and four-year-college-preparatory classes. A bonus from this program is that some of the student assistants have become interested in teaching as a career.

Since the development of reading skills is the main purpose of the laboratory program, the teacher must plan carefully for the reading activities for the year. An "Interest Inventory," supplied in the students' kit, is completed by students the first day of the semester, thus providing teachers with useful information on the reading abilities and disabilities and the interests of the students. However, in order to plan a reading program, the teacher must knww the reading skills of each student, so emphasis is placed on diagnosing student needs and supplying proper materials and careful instruction to meet their needs. Since the teachers are not reading experts, the method of diagnosis is relatively simple. Tests that are used for diagnostic purposes are the Metropolitan Achievement Tests and the Oral Gilmore Tests. Accurate interpretation of the test results requires considerable experience. Simple reading placement tests have been produced by the district to provide a quick means whereby teachers can determine approximate reading levels of students and find their most glaring reading deficiences. Materials and techniques are tailored to meet the needs revealed by diagnoses. As one means of evaluation, another form of the Metropolitan Reading Test is given at the end of the school year.

It has been found that a high percentage of the students need to dvelop reading comprehension and word-attack skills; therefore much emphasis is given to the development of these skills. Filmstrips that provide for sequential development of the sounds of vowels and consonants and for the development of phoneme-grapheme relationships are proving to be particularly valuable. A tachistoscopic attachment is used wherever its use is appropriate. Besides class work in word-attack skills, viewers and table screens are provided for individual use.

Many of the materials used in the laboratories provide for instruction and practice in structural analysis. Specially prepared transparencies used on the overhead projector are very effective in aiding students in strengthening this particular skill.

Vocabulary building is stressed in every reading lesson. In the literature lessons, special emphasis is given to teaching students how to get the meaning of words from context. Transparencies which present interesting and important words in context have been prepared for every story and are used on the overhead projector. The context clues are analyzed and, through discussion, the students arrive at the definition of the word being studied. All meanings are verified by using dictionaries, which are provided in class sets so that every student has one available at all times.

Critical thinking and evaluation of what is read are emphasized and developed through group discussion and through discussion of students' written evaluations.

The "listen and read" technique is used whenever there is a class assignment that some of the students cannot read. Each laboratory has a specially-wired table, equipped with head sets, to

use as a listening station. Some specially prepared materials have been duplicated and taped, and the students who are at a low reading level go to the listening station and follow along in the duplicated copy as they listen to the tape. This enables them to take part in class discussions or in any other activities that follow the reading of the script. Previously, in the conventional classroom these poorer readers either pretended they read the assignment or went to sleep.

In addition to the reading program, there is a comprehensive literature program that is conducted concurrently throughout the year. Frequently the teacher reads the class a story, a poem, a scene from a play, or plays a record or a tape. Thus students learn to appreciate material that is beyond their ability to read by themselves. Poetry appreciation and enjoyment are also enhanced through group or unison reading.

Drama has proved to be one of the most useful and stimulating media for use with high school terminal students. Plays are of great value for motivating students to read, to discuss, to listen intently, to participate in interpreting roles, and to read aloud or to tape their interpretations. To further motivate students through the use of drama, study trips are taken as frequently as possible. It is sometimes possible to get free admission for a class to attend a dress rehearsal of a play being presented by one of the local colleges or by the local repertory theatre; occasionally there are special student rates. With the help of Federal funds it has been possible to provide bus transportation to take students to hear and to see some of the plays. Discussion of the plays stimulates good speaking techniques and results in improved oral communication.

Not only does drama stimulate oral discussion it also serves to stimulate writing, that ranges from simple summaries to thoughtful evaluations according to the individual capabilities of the students.

Oral activities hold a prominent place in the English Language Laboratories. These students generally have trouble formulating questions. Before a speaker is to appear before the group, practice sessions are held, questions are formulated, and each student tapes a question to determine how well he speaks. Each student is then encouraged to ask his question of the speaker.

Many class discussions are directed in such a manner that students learn correct techniques of participating in discussions. Many of the discussions deal with problems concerning being courteous to speakers and other discussants. Frequently the discussions are taped and played back so that the students can evaluate their discussions and plan how to improve.

One of the best means for developing spontaneous oral expression has been found to be the use of the socio-drama. Students, through role playing, learn to present a point and stick to it, and to ask questions and to answer questions effectively and courteously.

Learning to give directions and to follow directions are essential skills for students who plan to enter some occupation upon completion of high school. Much emphasis is given to listening, following, and giving oral directions as well as to writing clear, concise directions and in following written directions.

Listening skills are developed concurrently with all lessons, and special lessons in listening have been developed and used with these students. At the beginning of the school year students are

given an informal diagnostic listening test and throughout the year other listening tests are given in order to measure students' progress. The interest of students in getting part-time jobs during their school years or in full-time employment after graduation is capitalized upon to develop listening skills in practical situtations, such as taking telephone messages and writing them down accurately, and listening to taped job interviews.

Daily newspapers provide the bases for many reading, speaking, and writing activities. A local newspaper provides copies once a week for each student. Many of the students who have never read newspapers have now become newspaper readers. They are interested in the front page make-up, weather reports, teen-age activities and accident reports, letters to the editor, and editorials. Surprisingly enough, they are most interested in the financial page and each selects a stock and keeps a record of its gains or losses.

One innovation that has perhaps brought about the greatest salutory change in student attitudes has been the introduction of typewriters into the reading, writing, spelling program. In each sophomore class in the laboratory students are oriented to the use of typewriters. Fifty to seventy-five percent of the students have taken or are taking typing lessons. They are encouraged to use typewriters for additional practice for improving their skills. Those who have had no typing are taught the typewriter keyboard in six lessons. All students are urged to make use of this opportunity to develop their typing skills because of the importance of typing in helping them get jobs. The major objective in use of the typewriter, however, is to improve spelling and composition.

Specially prepared programed spelling lessons for the typewriter have proved to be very successful.

Senior classes have recently been introduced to this program. Once a week students have the use of a laboratory and typewriters for writing their compositions. Not only has the use of typewriters improved the students' spelling and skill in writing paragraphs and longer compositions, it has had a beneficial effect upon attendance as well. Teachers report that on the day students are to use the typewriters, attendance is very nearly perfect even though the typing day is Monday, which is the day that school attendance is usually very poor.

Permeating the entire English curriculum is the consistent, constant attempt to improve student attitudes toward themselves, toward others, and toward their responsibilities to society. Special lessons, suggested in the guides, are designed to assist teachers in this important task. The materials used include films, literature, plays, live and taped job interviews, and class discussions.

There has been definite improvement in student attitudes as a result of the English laboratories. Students react favorably to the attractive room environment, to the new equipment and materials, to the smaller class size, and to the techniques employed by teachers. Lessons centered about their needs and their interests make them feel that the English course has meaning for them, that it is important, and that it is often enjoyable!

Under the traditional program, students similar to those now in the laboratory courses rarely worked throughout a period; they spent time in misbehavior, sleeping, or doing nothing. In contrast, it is

an exception when a student enrolled in the English laboratory does not work throughout the entire period. Attitudes toward developing skill in reading have improved greatly. Teachers in other subjects areas report that many of these students are now working much more diligently than they did formerly. Administrators, counselors, and teachers report that the number of discipline problems has been greatly reduced; rarely is one of these students referred to a councelor. Administrators support the program enthusiastically. They feel that if there were not other benefits, the improvement in student attitudes would justify the effort expended and the expense involved in implementing this program.

Presently the program is being expanded so that a similar program is being offered to students enrolled in junior-college-preparatory courses.

The strength of the program lies in its reaching the individual student so that he is motivated to learn to read and to express himself in acceptable English. The weakness of the program is the lack of teacher training in the field of teaching of reading. Through in-service training, with a corps of teachers who are eager and willing to learn on the job, this handicap is being removed.

## SUMMARY

School organization in the improvement of the instructional program has merit if reviewed from an impartial and cautious viewpoint. Educators must keep in mind the characteristics of pupils and how they learn, available school plans and facilities necessary for implementation of new programs, the cost of the programs, and the attitudes of parents, administrators, and teachers involved, and the

teaching skills of the teachers. Specific provision must be made for critical evaluation of results. A careful study of research should be made to determine the historical background and information available.

Each generation, building upon the experience and research of the past, should seek to improve existing instructional patterns, or develop new ones, better adapted to the various conditioning factors of the type of school, the curriculum, the pupils, and the teachers.

As one gives a thoughtful considerations to this research and these experiences, he may arrive again at the disquieting conclusion previously arrived at by the educational researchers before him, that organizational patterns seem to have little to do with pupil achievement when viewed in relation to the *quality* of the instructional program. What we do in teaching students is far more important than how or for how long we assign them to planned or elaborately equipped classrooms.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY


1. Shane, Harold G. "Grouping in the Elementary School." *Phi Delta Kappan*, (April 1960), p. 313-317.

2. Kilpatrick, Irving. *Departmental Teaching in Elementary Schools.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908.

3. Hosic, James F. "Cooperative Group Plan," Reported by Harold G. Shane, "Grouping in the Elementary School," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 1960, 0. 314.

4. Kilpatrick, William Heard. *Source Book in the Philosophy of Education.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934.

5. Kyte, George C. *The Principal at Work* (rev.ed.). New York: Ginn and Company, 1952.

6. Gates, Arthur. "How Can One Tell What New Practices Seem Most Promising?" *Improvement of Reading Through Classroom Practices.* (Conference Proceedings of the International Reading Association. 1964. p. 23-24.

7. McKim, Margaret G. *Guiding Growth in Reading.* (2nd ed.) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963.

8. Bereiter, Carl and Engelmann, Siegfried. *Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.

9. *Language Programs for the Disadvantaged.* (Report of the National Council of Teachers of English Task Force.) The National Council of Teachers of English, 1965.